

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-14 RSC-01 ISO-00

CG-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 CEQ-02

COA-02 COME-00 EB-11 EPA-04 IO-14 NSF-04 SCI-06

ACDA-19 AEC-11 AGR-20 DOTE-00 CIEP-02 FMC-04 INT-08

CEA-02 JUSE-00 OMB-01 OIC-04 DRC-01 /294 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4808

INFO AMEMBASSY NASSAU

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 6721

FROM US DEL LOS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJ: LOS: ARCHIPELAGO DEFINITION

REF: STATE 139044

1. EARLY DRAFT US ARCHIPELAGO PROPOSAL FOR THE PURPOSE
OF EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH FIJI, INDOESIA AND PHILIPPINES
REQUIRED THAT ALL ISLANDS OF ARCHIPELAGO STATE BE INCLUDED
WITHIN THE ARCHIPELAGIC CONSTRUCTION LINES. A PROBLEM
DEVELOPED WITH FIJI IN THAT ITS ISLANDS ROTUMA AND
CONWAY LIE SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES FROM THE MAIN ISLAND
GROUP. EVEN FIJI RECOGNIZED THAT THEIR INCLUSION
WITHIN THE NATIONAL SYSTEM WOULD HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS
ON THE ARCHIPELAGO CONCEPT. AS A RESULT, THE ORIGINAL
US LANGUAGE WAS MODIFIED TO PERMIT NON- INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS.
HOWEVER, NON-INCLUSION OF ALL ISLANDS COULD PERMIT SELECTIVE
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CREATION BY VIRTUALLY ALL INSULAR STATES, E.G. UK, JAPAN,

AUSTRALIA OF ARGHIPELAGOS DRAWN ABOUT MINOR ISLANDS. THIS PRACTICE WAS NOT ENVISIONED IN ORIGINAL CONCEPT. FUTHER-MORE, MOST OF THESE STATES HAVE AVAILABLE AN OPTION, UNDER ARTICLE 4 OF EXISTING TERRITORIAL SEA CONVENTION, TO DRAW STRAIGHT BASELINES ABOUT PRINCIPAL ISLAND AS "MAINLAND" UNDER THE TERMS OF THE ARTICLE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE REVISION WAS ENLARGED TO STATE THAT THE "PRINCIPAL ISLAND OR ISLANDS" SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE ARCHIPELAGO SYSTEM. THIS ADDITION WOULD REQUIRE THE UK TO INCLUDE GREAT BRITAIN AND JAPAN TO INCLUDE FOUR MAIN ISLANDS. THESE INCLUSIONS WOULD ELIMINATE THEM FROM THE ARCHIPELAGO CONCEPT UNDER THE MAXIMUM 1:1 LAND/WATER RATIO. THESE STATES THEN COULD UTILIZE STRAIGHT BASELINE SYSTEMS IF DESIRED; ARTICLE 4 IS DEEMED NOT TO BE SELF-EXECUTING.

2. IN THE CASE OF THE BAHAMAS, HOWEVER, NO ONE ISLAND DOMINATES IN SIZE THE ISLAND CHAIN. THE PARAGRAPH 3 OF THE CITED MESSAGE POINTED OUT THIS FACT INCLUDING REFERENCE TO THE IMPORTANT POSITION OF THE SMALL ISLAND OF NEW PROVIDENCE TO THE TOTAL POPULATION AND ECONOMY OF THE COMMONWEALTH. THE MESSAGE WAS MEANT TO FLAG THE ISSUE BEFORE AN INTERPRETATION CLEARLY ESTABLISHED THAT US, IN REFERRING TO PRINCIPAL ISLAND OR ISLANDS, EQUATED THE PHRASE ONLY WITH SIZE OF ISLAND OR ISLANDS.

3. THE EFFECT OF THE US PROPOSAL ON THE BAHAMAS IS MINIMAL. WHILE ALL ISLANDS COULD BE INCLUDED WITHIN AN ARCHIPELAGO SYSTEM BY 80-MILE CONSTRUCTION LINES, THE RESULTING LAND/WATER RATIO WOULD BE LESS THAN 1:20. A SYSTEM INCLUDING ANDROS, NP, ELEUTHERA, CAT, SAN SALVADOR, LONG AND GREAT EXUMA WOULD HAVE A LAND/WATER RATION OF APPROXIMATELY 1:6.4, TOO SMALL FOR THE CURRENT US PARAMETERS FOR THE DEFINITION OF AN ARCHIPELAGO. THE EXCLUSION OF SAN SALVADOR, RUM AND LONG ISLANDS ONLY INCREASES THE LAND/WATER RATION OF THE SYSTEM TO 1:5.88. THUS A 1:5 SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE RESTRICTIVE AND COULD NOT REALISTICALLY INCLUDE MUCH BAHAMANIAN TERRITORY WITHIN THE LIMITS. IT WOULD FURTHERMORE NOT

SOLVE BAHAMIAN CONCERNS WHICH ESSENTIALLY APPEAR TO
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RELATE TO DELIMITATION PROBLEMS, IN PARTICULAR THE USE OR NON-USE OF SMALL OUTLYING ISLANDS ON THE DELIMITATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF OR ECONOMIC ZONE BOUNDARIES. THE SOLUTION TO THESE ISSUES WOULD APPEAR TO REST ON THE ISLAND QUESTION RATHER THAN THE ARCHIPELAGO QUESTION. THE ADOPTION OF AN ARCHIPELAGO WOULD NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, EXTEND THE BAHAMIAN ECONOMIC ZONE SIGNIFICANTLY. CURRENT ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE EXTENSION WOULD BE IN THE VICINITY OF 1 (ONE)

PERCENT. IN ADDITION, THE INDOESIA - AUSTRALIA CONTINENTAL
SHELF BOUNDARY AGREEMENT APPEARS TO GRANT TO INDOESIAN
ISLANDS A VALUE LESS THAN TRUE EQUIDISTANCE FOR THE
CREATION OF THE BOUNDARY EVEN THOUGH THESE ISLANDS ARE
ENCLOSED WITHIN THE SO-CALLED INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO. THE
FINAL BOUNDARY WAS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF
THE TIMOR TRENCH BETWEEN THE TWO STATES AS MUCH AS BY THE
ISLAND QUESTION. THE BAHAMES IS SITUATED UPON A MORE OR
LESS CONTINUOUS SHELF AREA IN THE SOUTH AND WEST WHICH
IS SEPARATED FROM THE UNITED STATES AND FROM
CUBA BY RELATIVELY DEEP WATER. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS
TOO EARLY IN THE CONFERENCE TO ASSESS THE VALUE OF THIS
DEEP WATER ON ANY SEHLF NEHOTIATIONS WDEA
SLLUFCMR NG
STATES.

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5. A COPY OF A DRAFT ON THE ELEMENTS TF OER POSITION

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